

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable consideration of this application, as presently amended and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 14-27 and 37-114 are presently pending in this application, Claims 1-3, 5-13 and 28-36 having been canceled, and Claims 38-114 having been newly added by the present amendment.

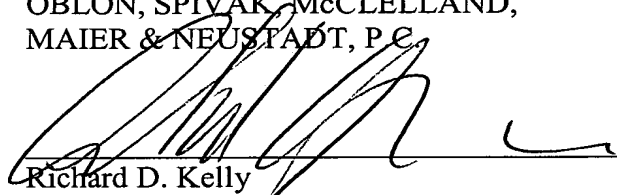
In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 1-3, 5-7, 9-13, 19, 21, 28, 29, 32, 35 and 36 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Gipson et al. (U.S. Patent 4,732,446); Claim 34 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Weidel (U.S. Patent 4,966,430); Claims 20 and 22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Gipson et al.; Claims 8 and 23-26 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Gipson et al. in further view of Kropp et al. (U.S. Patent 6,457,875); Claims 30 and 31 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Gipson et al. in further view of Kosemura (U.S. Patent 6,330,377); and Claim 33 and 34 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Gipson et al. in further view of Weidel. However, Claims 14-18 and 27 were indicated as allowable if rewritten in independent form, and Claim 37 was indicated as allowed.

First, Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the indication that Claims 14-18 and 27 include allowable subject matter, and Claim 37 was allowed. Accordingly, Claims 14-18 have been rewritten in their respective independent forms and Claim 27 has been rewritten in its independent form as Claim 114. In addition, dependent Claims 11, 12 and 19-33 have been amended and rewritten to depend from each of Claims 14-18. Consequently, Applicants respectfully request that Claims 1-13 and 28-36 be canceled without prejudice.

In light of the prior indication of allowable subject matter and in view of the amendments and discussions presented above, Applicants respectfully submit that the present application is in condition for allowance, and an early action favorable to that effect is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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